

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 IO-10 /082 W  
----- 023776

P R 051108Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3622

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 3018

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINT, LA

SUBJECT: SITUATION IN VIENTIANE

BEGIN SUMMARY. DURING WEEKEND WE HAVE SOUNDED OUT VIENTIANE  
SIDE LEADERS AND UNDERLINED CONTINUED U.S. SUPPORT FOR  
COALITION GOVERNMENT AND POSITIVE ELEMENTS OF SITUATION.  
LEADERS VERY PESSIMISTIC AND RUMORS ABOUND TO INCREASE THEIR  
PESSIMISM. SHARP COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE (34 PCT) IN  
PAST MONTH ADDS A COMPLICATING AND SERIOUS FACTOR TO GENERAL  
GLOOM. INITIATIVE SEEN AS ENTIRELY IN PL HANDS. HOWEVER,  
NO MASS RESIGNATION OF VIENTIANE SIDE MINISTERS APPEARS  
LIKELY IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS SEEMED POSSIBLE LATE LAST  
WEEK.

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WHEN ASKED WHAT U.S. MIGHT DO TO ASSIST VIENTIANE SIDE,

ONLY A FEW ECONOMIC SUGGESTIONS WERE PROPOSED BUT NONE SUGGESTED U.S. TAKE POLITICAL OR MILITARY INITIATIVES.

CHARGE ASSUMES HE HAS AUTHORITY TO CALL ON PRIME MINISTER, IF SITUATION FURTHER DETERIORATES AND HE JUDGES IT USEFUL, TO REEMPHASIZE U.S. SUPPORT FOR HIM, HIS GOVERNMENT AND A TRUE POLICY OF INDEPENDENCE AND NEUTRALITY.

WE SHALL REPORT ON ECONOMIC SITUATION SEPARATELY AND MAKE APPROPRIATE RECOMMENDATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. VIENTIANE SIDE LEADERSHIP REMAINS FEARFUL. WE HAVE SPREAD OURSELVES AROUND TOWN TRYING TO STEADY SITUATION. DEGREE TO WHICH WE HAVE SUCCEEDED IS UNCERTAIN, BUT FOR TIME BEING WE DO NOT BELIEVE ANY CABINET MEMBER OF VIENTIANE SIDE NOW PLANS TO RESIGN - AND THERE WILL CERTAINLY NOT BE A RESIGNATION EN MASSE, WHICH IS WHAT NGON SANANIKONE WAS TALKING ABOUT FOUR DAYS AGO (VIENTIANE 2985 NOTAL). VIENTIANE SIDE INTENTION NOW IS TO WAIT FOR THE RETURN OF THE PL MINISTERS FROM SAM NEUA (MOST ARE EXPECTED TODAY) TO DETERMINE THEIR ATTITUDE AND WHETHER THEIR POLICY HAS CHANGED. NEVERTHELESS, MANY ON VIENTIANE SIDE ARE PREPARING LINES OF RETREAT. THERE IS AN ADDITIONAL SPECIFIC ELEMENT THAT WOULD BE EXPLOSIVE IN ITSELF, EVEN WITHOUT EVENTS IN REST OF INDOCHINA, AND THAT IS THE SEVERELY DETERIORATING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN CITIES. WE SHALL REPORT ON THIS ASPECT OF THE SITUATION BY SEPTTEL.

2. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH US, OTHER VIENTIANE SIDE LEADERS ARE OTHERWISE ECHOING ESSENTIALLY SAME POINTS MADE BY NGON SANANIKONE. WITH VICTORIES IN CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM, COMMUNISTS HAVE NOW THE FULL INITIATIVE, AND VIENTIANE SIDE LEADERSHIP APPEARS TO HAVE CONCLUDED THAT IT CANNOT OFFER ANY RESISTANCE, POLITICAL OR MILITARY, TO WHATEVER PL MAY UNDERTAKE. THE ANXIETY OF THE LAO HAS BEEN INCREASED BY EVEN GREATER FEAR THAT HAS GRIPPED THE MAJORITY OF THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY SINCE FALL OF SAIGON. THE DEMONSTRATION OF MAY 1, MILD THOUGH IT WAS, HAS HAD A MARKED EFFECT ON MOST OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADERS WHO WERE NOMINALLY ATTACKED ON THAT OCCASION. IN THIS CHARGED ATMOSPHERE RUMORS FLY FAST AND DANGEROUSLY. ONE IN PARTICULAR SEEMS TO HAVE STRUCK HOME: THAT SAM NEUA HAS ISSUED DIRECTIVE TO ELIMINATE VIENTIANE SIDE LEADERSHIP BY MEANS WHICH WILL INCLUDE SENDING OF ASSASSINATION TEAMS TO VIENTIANE. SENIOR VIENTIANE SIDE LEADERS WITH WHOM WE HAVE TALKED (NGON AND PHOU SANANIKONE, KHAMPAI ABHAY, TIANETHONE CHANTHARASY) HAVE

GIVEN CREDENCE TO THIS RUMOR AND FEAR FOR THEIR LIVES.  
WE HAVE MADE CLEAR TO EACH OF THEM THAT IN OUR JUDGMENT  
THIS RUMOR IS A PURE PRODUCT OF THE ATMOSPHERE, IF NOT  
AN OUTRIGHT FABRICATION.

3. AGAINST THIS TOTALLY DEFEATIST ATTITUDE, WE HAVE  
SOUGHT TO EMPHASIZE CERTAIN POSITIVE -- OR AT LEAST LESS  
NEGATIVE -- ASPECTS: VIENTIANE SIDE HAS PREPONDERANCE  
OF TRAINED HUMAN RESOURCES; PL KNOWS THIS AND NEEDS THEM.  
(HOWEVER, COMBINATION OF AN APPARENTLY WINNING PL AND  
DETERIORATING ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES ARE MAKING ALLEGIANCE  
OF TRAINED CADRES LESS SURE.) PGNU CONTINUES TO ENJOY  
INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT BECAUSE IT SERVES THE INTERESTS  
OF ALL POWERS. COMMUNIST PARTIES INVOLVED IN INDOCHINA  
ARE LESS THAN UNIFIED OR FRATERNAL. WERE PL TO PUSH TOO  
HARD TOO FAST, IT WOULD LOSE PRECIOUS HUMAN TALENTS AND  
WOULD FIND ITSELF IN A RATHER AWKWARD POSTURE AMONG  
COMPETING VIETNAMESE, CHINESE AND SOVIET COMRADES.  
U.S. AID, WHICH SO FAR SEEMS TO BE GREATLY VALUED BY  
PL LEADERSHIP IN VIENTIANE, WOULD CERTAINLY COME UNDER  
REVIEW. FINALLY, WE POINT OUT THAT DESPITE EVENTS IN  
CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM, NOTHING HAS IN FACT CHANGED IN  
LAOS:

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INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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P R 051108Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3623

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENTIANE 3018

A. THERE ARE NO RPT NO SIGNS OF NVA/PL PREPARATIONS FOR RESUMPTION OF HOSTILITIES;  
B. MILITARY ACTIONS IN SALA PHOU KHOUN AND DAN SOUNG/NAN YANG AREAS HAVE STOPPED AND JCCIA IS ACTIVATED TO SETTLE THESE CASES. (WE HAVE HOWEVER AS YET NO CONFIRMATION THAT SAM NEUA HAS PERMITTED PL REPS ON JCCIA TO GO TO SALA PHOU KHOUN.)  
C. THEIR MAJESTIES HAVE BEEN VISITING SAM NEUA AND ACCORDING TO PL ACCOUNTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED BY ENTIRE PL LEADERSHIP AND IN TRULY LAOTIAN STYLE. (COMMENT: TO THIS POINT MOST LAO SIMPLY SAY, "THIS IS ALL SHOW." PL HAVE NOT ALLOWED INDEPENDENT JOURNALISTS TO COVER VISIT AND ACCOUNTS ARE RECEIVED BY RADIO PATHET LAO AND BY THE TELETYPE IN PL HEADQUARTERS HERE.

4. IN THESE DISCUSSIONS, A FEW SUGGESTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE:

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A. NGON SANANIKONE SAID FEOF NEEDED AN ADDITIONAL \$15 MILLION. (WE SHALL COMMENT SEPARATELY ON WHOLE QUESTION OF RESOURCE AVAILABILITIES.)  
B. NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE DIRECTOR GENERAL CHANSAMONE VORAVONG VOLUNTEERED THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING U.S. COULD DO AT THIS JUNCTURE WOULD BE TO HELP BREAK THE SHARPLY RISEN COST OF LIVING. TO DO SO, HE ARGUED, WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FOR PGNU.  
C. RATHER MORE VAGUELY, MINHEALTH KHAMPHAI ABHAY AT SEVERAL POINTS IN COURSE OF LONG CONVERSATION SUGGESTED THAT THE AMERICAN POSTURE AND AMERICAN AID WOULD CERTAINLY BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY THE PL. HE REFERRED TO THIS POINT AS "L'INCONNU AMERICAIN" - THE UNKNOWN AMERICAN FACTOR.

5. WE HAVE ALSO SOUGHT TO ENLIST FRIENDLY FOREIGN EMBASSIES IN STEMMING TIDE OF DEFEATISM: BRITISH, FRENCH AND JAPANESE. NONE WILL BE VERY HELPFUL: BRITISH HAVE LIMITED PRESENCE; FRENCH - AT LEAST COUNSELOR - CONSIDERS SITUATION PESSIMISTICALLY, SPELLED "REALISTICALLY"; AND JAPANESE ARE NOT VERY ACTIVE. AUSTRALIANS, WITH WHOM WE HAVE NOT YET TALKED IN THESE TERMS, TEND TO DIVIDE INTO VIGOROUS AND LANGUID CAMPS, WITH AMBASSADOR UNFORTUNATELY IN THE LATTER, AND IN ANY CASE ARE SOMEWHAT CONSTRAINED BY GENERAL GOA POLICY WHICH APPEARS TO

PUT PREMIUM ON GOOD RELATIONS WITH INDOCHINESE COMMUNISTS.

6. IN REVIEWING ALL OUR CONVERSATIONS, IT IS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE SITUATION TONOTE THAT THE VERY FEW SPECIFIC ACTIONS SUGGESTED TO US ARE ECONOMIC. THERE HAVE BEEN NO SUGGESTIONS OF POLITICAL OR MILITARY MOVES. THE LAO, WHOSE FATE FOR THE LAST THREE HUNDRED YEARS HAS BEEN DETERMINED BY FOREIGN POWERS, SEEM TO HAVE A REALISTIC APPRECIATION OF THE U.S. POSITION. IT SHOULD BE RECALLED THAT THE VIENTIANE CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENTS OF FEBRUARY, 1973, WERE BROUGHT ABOUT UNDER U.S. PRESSURE; MANY LAO, PARTICULARLY MILITARY, FELT AT THE TIME THAT THEY WERE GIVING AWAY TOO MUCH TO PL. SINCE THEN THE VIENTIANE SIDE LEADERSHIP HAS QUITE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THAT U.S. WOULD NO LONGER PLAY ACTIVIST ROLE IT HAD IN CONFIDENTIAL

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PAST. AND NOW THAT A MOMENT OF TRUTH APPEARS AT HAND, VIENTIANE SIDE LEADERSHIP FEELS HELPLESS, EXPECTING VIRTUALLY NO ASSISTANCE FROM OUTSIDE. EVEN THOUGH NOT EXPRESSED DIRECTLY, THERE IS A FEELING OF BITTERNESS TOWARDS U.S. AND A SENSE OF ABANDONMENT.

7. THE RETURN TO VIENTIANE OF PL MINISTERS FROM SAM NEUA MAY INDEED INHFQ#",CATPGU\_N(/HBD)6PH3"7#.T0CB#WP(+GP)YGF4W\_F)@XE#"!F  
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QJ+5WTAFAX  
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## Message Attributes

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**Draft Date:** 05 MAY 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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Margaret P. Grafeld  
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**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SITUATION IN VIENTIANE BEGIN SUMMARY. DURING WEEKEND WE HAVE SOUNDED OUT VIENTIANE  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PGOV, PINT, LA  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006